

Early Modern English

EModE 1500-1700

Most important writer: **Shakespeare 1564-1616**

Recall:	OE	449-1150
	ME	1150-1500
	EModE	1500-1700
	ModE	1700-

ENGLISH TIME LINE

- 449 Angels, Saxons and Jutes settle in England
- 787 Viking raids begin
- 878 King Alfred defeats Vikings at Ethandun (modern Edington)
- 886 Treaty of Wedmore, creation of **Danelaw**
- 1066 Duke William of Normandy conquers English Throne
- 1362 English reinstated for use in Parliament
- 1380 Chaucer at work on **Canterbury Tales**
- 1476 Caxton sets up printing press in Westminster (London)
- 1558 Queen Elizabeth I
- 1588 Defeat of Spanish Armada
- 1592 Shakespeare begins writing for stage (**Henry VI**, parts 1-3)
- 1600 Shakespeare's **Hamlet**
- 1611 King James Bible, Shakespeare retires from writing for stage
- 1649 **Interregnum**: Puritan Cromwell Lord Protector
- 1660 **Restoration** of monarchy: King Charles II
- 1667 Milton's **Paradise Lost**
- 1688 "Glorious Revolution": William and Mary II joint rulers
- 1695 Augustan/Neo-Classical literary period
- 1700 First "modern" drama **The Way of the World** by Congreve

1. The Great Vowel Shift (GVS)

Shakespeare's English during the GVS

Step 1: i and u drop and become θI and θU

Step 2: e and o move up, becoming i and u

Step 3: a moves forward to æ

Step 4: ϵ becomes e, ɔ becomes o

Step 5: æ moves up to e

Step 6: e moves up to i

A new e was created in Step 4; now that e moves up to i.

Step 7: ϵ moves up to e

The new ϵ created in Step 5 now moves up.

Step 8: θI and θU drop to aI and aU

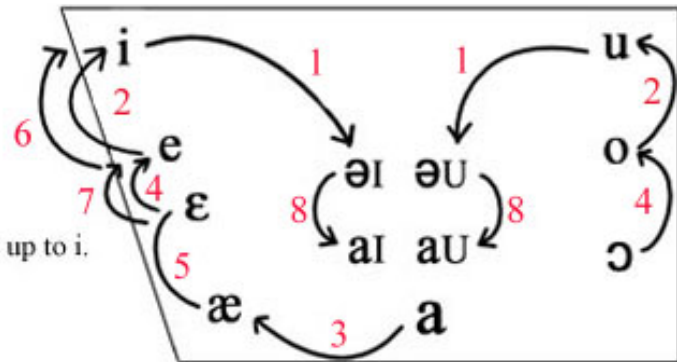


Diagram from <http://facweb.furman.edu/~mmenzer/gvs/what.htm>

LONG VOWELS		
LATE MIDDLE ENGLISH	EARLY MODERN ENGLISH	LATER ENGLISH
[ā] as in <i>name</i> →	[æ] > [ē] ³ →	[e]
[ē] as in <i>feet</i> →	[i] →	
[ē̄] as in <i>greet</i> 'great' →	[e] →	
[ī] as in <i>ride</i> →	[θI] →	[aI]
[ō] as in <i>boote</i> 'boot' →	[u] →	
[ō̄] as in <i>boot</i> 'boat' →	[o] →	
[ū] as in <i>hous</i> →	[θU] →	[aU]

Table from Pyles/Algeo, p. 171

2. Characteristic features of EModE

2.1 Spelling

Most editions have regularized spelling
But you may see:

Word-initial v	vpon, vnderstand
Word-internal u	haue, forgiue

ck for k	musick, physick
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Note various contractions: **'tis, 'twas, 'twere,**

an't please you	for an it (an = 'if')
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the morning comes upon 's	for upon us
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and after seem to chide 'em	for chide them
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he plays o' the viol de gamboys	for on the
--	-------------------

what kind o' man is he?	for kind of
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Capitalization

Nouns can be proper or common.

Proper nouns include the names of people and places,
and these are capitalized in EmodE,
along with titles like **Count, Sir, Mistress**

Most modern editions have regularized spelling,
but EmodE writers often capitalized common nouns, e.g.

in Hamlet III iv 137 ff. the First Folio:

**Qu. This is the very coynage of your Braine,
This bodillesse Creation extasie is very cunning in.**

**Ham. Extasie?
My Pulse as yours doth temperately keepe time
And makes as healthful Musicke.**

Writers continue to capitalize especially abstract nouns and topically salient nouns (and even sometimes adjectives) throughout the EmodE period;

Hamlet III iv 147 ff. (First Folio):

It will but skin and filme the Vlcerous place;

We even find participles capitalized in Hamlet (First Folio):

Why thy Canoniz'd bones Hearsed in death.

In fact, this practice becomes more prevalent up to the 18th Century;
compare Swift's **Baucis and Philemon** (1706):

**Give us but Straw, and let us Ly
In yonder Barn to keep us dry.**

Apostrophes

Possessive endings were not usually marked with an apostrophe, though modern editions generally add them, we find e.g. in **Hamlet** (First Folio):

I am thy Fathers Spirit by a Brothers hand

Apostrophes generally signal contractions, as in:

'tis time I'faith 'gainst death let's follow

But the practice is not consistent; compare:

Ile follow thee

Note verb suffix: 'd for -ed

be thou assur'd, his damn'd fingers

Pronunciation

Both plural and possessive endings might be pronounced as full syllables, as the meter in the lines below suggests:

To show his teeth as white as whales bone (LLL V ii 232)
I see you have a monthes mind to them (Two Gent I ii
137)

2.2 Grammar

Nouns

Old Plural forms

Shakespeare still uses some old irregular plurals we no longer find today

-en plural: eyen, eyne (eyes), shone (shoes), kine (cows)
(cf. oxen, children, brethren)

zero plural: horse, folk, pound, year
(cf. deer, sheep, swine, fish)

e.g. **horse** occurs with zero plural in **Henry IV, Part 1; II i (1st Quarto): and yet our horse not packt**

Possessives

EModE had unmarked possessives in constructions like:

**the bishop palace, Friar Lawrence cell,
for recreation sake**

we also find the so-called **his**-genitive

A sea-fight 'gainst the Count his galleys

Noun phrase constructions

Adjective precedes Determiner

Especially in vocatives and forms of address with **my**, as in:

good my brother **dear my lord**

but we even find adjectives preceding the indefinite article, e.g.:

As I remember, Adam, it was upon this fashion
bequeathed me by will but **poor a thousand crowns**, AYLI I i

Personal pronouns as nouns

personal pronouns can function as nouns with adjective modifiers

Lady, you are the cruell'st she alive **12th Night I v**

Split constructions:

Adjective precedes Noun and Adjective Modifier follows:

Of different flowers in odour and in hue Sonnet 98

Cf. construction with preceding participle (from **Rheims Bible**
1582):

the translated Bibles into the vulgar tonges

Coordinate Adjectives precede and follow Noun:

An honest mind and a plain (King Lear)

Even with intervening material in Henry 1V, Part 1:

A goodly portly man, y'faith and a corpulent

Pronouns

thou, thee, thy, thine vs **ye, you**

thy vs **thine** **Within thine own bud buriest thy content**
my vs **mine** **In faith, I do not love thee with mine eyes,**

his for **its** **When as thy love hath cast his utmost sum,**

no **self** in reflexive **he takes on him to understand so much**
Against that time do I ensconce me here

Verbs

Verb Inflections

3rd person **-(e)th**: **she goeth, hath, doth**
2nd person **-(e)st**: **thou goest, dost, art, wert, wast, hast, wilt**

Word Order **V – S** **thus came they home; here lies your way**

his-genitive **Nor Mars his sword nor war's swift fires**

Auxiliary Constructions

Dummy Aux **Rough winds do shake the darling buds of**
May

Question without Aux

Yes-No Question **Comes Caesar to the Capitol tomorrow?**

Wh-Question **why hear'st thou music sadly?**

Negation without Aux **His rider loved not speed**

Sweets with sweets war not

Multiple Negation **And live no more to shame nor me nor you.**

None else to me, nor I to none alive,

Comparison: 2 forms **Grows fairer than at first, more strong, far greater**

Multiple Comparison **This was the most unkindest cut of all**

be + Perfect **And you are come in very happy time**

Impersonal construction **so it please thee hold ;
This lodging likes me better**

Relative Clauses

that for people **And he that calls on thee,**

which for people **till he faced the slave, which ne'er shook hands**

whose for things **upon that blessed wood whose motion sounds**

no relative word **there's one ____ did laugh in's sleep**

3. Verse

Nay, then, God buy you, an you talk in blank verse.
AYLI IV i 31

blank verse = iambic pentameter without end rhyme

pentameter = line with five metric feet

iambic foot = unstressed – stressed

That time of year thou mayst in me behold

In Shakespeare's plays, we should say blank verse is iambic pentameter

with occasional end rhyme for special effect, e.g. in **Romeo & Juliet**

Act I **Prologue** in sonnet form

I v 46 ff. rhymed couplets when Romeo sees Juliet for the first time

Oh, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!	a
It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night	a
Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear –	b
Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear!	b

I v 95 ff. abab, cdcd rhymes when Romeo and Juliet first speak together

If I profane with my unworhiest hand	a
This holy shrine, the gentle fine is this,	b
My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand	a
To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.	b

And occasional other meters, e.g. in **MSND**

II ii 27 ff when Oberon casts a spell

**What thou seest when thou dost wake,
Do it for thy truelove take,
Love and languish for his sake.**

II ii 66 ff when Puck speaks

**Through the forest have I gone,
But Athenian found I none
On whose eyes I might approve
This flower's force in stirring love.**

Note: Shakespeare often ends line with an unstressed eleventh syllable

And like this insubstantial pageant faded **Tempest IV I**
155

And sometimes we have to drop a syllable somewhere in the middle

Either shortening a single word like **mockery** to **mock'ry** in

Wherefore was I to this keen mockery born? **MSND II ii 123**

Or by eliding two words like **to + untie** as **t'untie** in

It is too hard a knot for me to untie **12th Night II ii 42**

Also: words ending in **-ion** may be pronounced with two final syllables

The brightest heaven of invention **Hen V Prologue 2**

Prodigal Son, Pyles/Algeo, pp. 210-211

XV. 11. A certaine man had two sonnes: 12. And the yonger of them said to his father, Father, giue me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he diuided vnto them his liuing. 13. And not many dayes after, the yonger sonne gathered al together, and tooke

his iourney into a farre countrey, and there wasted his substance with riotous liuing. 14. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land, and he beganne to be in want. 15. And he went and ioyned himselfe to a citizen of that countrey, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16. And he would faine haue filled his belly with the huskes that the swine did eate: and no man gaue vnto him. 17. And when he came to himselfe, he said, How many hired seruants of my fathers haue bread inough and to spare and I perish with hunger. . . . 20. And he arose and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ranne, and fell on his necke, and kissed him. 21. And the sonne said vnto him, Father, I have sinned against heauen, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy sonne. 22. But the father saide to his seruants, Bring foorth the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shooes on his feete. 23. And bring hither the fatted calfe, and kill it, and let us eate and be merrie. 24. For this my sonne was dead, and is aliue againe; hee was lost, and is found.



THE TRAGEDIE OF HAMLET, Prince of Denmarke.

Actus Primus. Scena Prima.

Enter *Bernardo* and *Francisco* two Centinels.

Bernardo.

Ho's there?

Fran. Nay answer me: Stand & unfold
your selfe.

Bar. Long live the King.

Fran. *Bernardo?*

Bar. He.

Fran. You come most carefully vpon your houre.

Bar. 'Tis now strook twelue, get thee to bed *Francisco*.

Fran. For this reliefe much thanks: 'Tis bitter cold,
And I am sicke at heart.

Bar. Haue you had quiet Guard?

Fran. Not a Mouse stirring.

Bar. Well, goodnight. If you do meet *Horatio* and
Marcellus, the Riuals of my Watch, bid them make hast.

Enter *Horatio* and *Marcellus*.

Fran. I thinke I heare them. Stand: who's there?

Hor. Friends to this ground.

Mar. And Leige-men to the Dane.

Fran. Giue you good night.

Mar. O farwel honest Soldier, who hath relieu'd you?

Fra. *Bernardo* ha's my place: giue you goodnight.

Exit *Fran.*

Mar. Holla *Bernardo*.

Bar. Say, what is *Horatio* there?

Hor. A peece of him.

Bar. Welcome *Horatio*, welcome good *Marcellus*.

Mar. What, ha's this thing appear'd againe to night.

Bar. I haue seene nothing.

Mar. *Horatio* saies, 'tis but our Fantasie,
And will not let beleefe take hold of him
Touching this dreaded sight, twice seene of vs,
Therefore I haue increatd him along
With vs, to watch the minutes of this Night,
That if againe this Apparition come,
He may approue our eyes, and speake to it.

Hor. Tush, tush, 'twill not appeare.

Bar. Sit downe a while,

And let vs once againe assaile your eares,
That are so fortified against our Story,
What we two Nights haue seene.

Hor. Well, sit we downe,

And let vs heare *Bernardo* speake of this.

Bar. Last night of all,

When yond same Scaree that's Westward from the Pole
Had made his course: 'illume that part of Heauen

Where now it burnes, *Asarcellus* and my selfe,
The Bell then beating one.

Mar. Peace, breake thee of: Enter the Ghost.
Looke where it comes againe.

Bar. In the same figure, like the King that's dead.

Mar. Thou art a Schooller; speake to it *Horatio*.

Bar. Lookes it not like the King? Marke it *Horatio*.

Hor. Most like: It harrowes me with feare & wonder

Bar. It would be spoke too.

Mar. Question it *Horatio*.

Hor. What art thou that vsurp'st this time of night,
Together with that Faire and Warlike forme
In which the Maiesty of buried Denmarke
Did sometimes march: By Heauen I charge thee speake.

Mar. It is offended.

Bar. See, it stalkes away.

Hor. Stay: speake; speake; I Charge thee, speake.

Exit the Ghost.

Mar. 'Tis gone, and will not answer.

Bar. How now *Horatio*? You tremble & look pale:
Is not this something more then Fantasie?

What thinke you on't?

Hor. Before my God, I might not this beleue:
Without the sensible and true auouch
Of mine owne eyes.

Mar. Is it not like the King?

Hor. As thou art to thy selfe,

Such was the very Armour he had on,

When ch' Ambitious Norway combated:

So frown'd he once, when in an angry parle

He smot the flegged Pollax on the Iee.

'Tis strange.

Mar. Thus twice before, and iust at this dead houre,
With Martiall stalke, hath he gone by our Watch.

Hor. In what particular thought to work, I know not:
But in the grosse and scope of my Opinion,
This boades some strange eruption to our State.

Mar. Good now sit downe, & tell me he that knowes
Why this same strict and most obseruat Watch,
So nightly toyles the subiect of the Land,
And why such dayly Cast of Brazon Cannon
And Forraigne Mart for Implements of warre:
Why such impresse of Ship-wights, whose fore Taske
Do's not diuide the Sunday from the weeke,
What might be toward, that this sweary hast
Doth make the Night ioynt-Labourer with the day:
Who is't that can infatme me?

Hor. That can I,